

The New Science  
*of*  
Controlled Breathing

*By*  
EDWARD LANKOW



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*Lesson II*

Controlled Breathing as a Means of  
Exercise

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CORRECTIVE EATING SOCIETY, INC.  
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# THE NEW SCIENCE OF CONTROLLED BREATHING

The Secret of Strength,  
Energy and Beauty—Through  
Breath Control

By EDWARD LANKOW

Leading basso with the Boston, Metropolitan and  
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of controlled breathing

## LESSON II

**Controlled Breathing as a Means of Exercise**

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## LESSON II

### **Controlled Breathing as a Means of Exercise**

Many theories concerning the art of breathing have been exploited in recent years. Numerous books dealing with the subject have been offered to the public. The net results, however, have been unsatisfactory. The appeal of this propaganda has met with comparatively little response. The truth as to the importance of right method in breathing may have been presented, but it has remained valueless, since it has not been accepted and acted upon by those to whom it was addressed. Perhaps in great measure the fault lies in the fact that the various advocates of breath-systems have been too vague in their teachings, have expounded the theory rather than the practice.

It is for this reason that I have been at pains to describe all necessary exercises in such detail as to make the practice of them simple and easy for every reader, I have arranged them in such

order as to make sure a rapid progress toward perfect breath-control, with its consequent increase in health, beauty, efficiency and happiness.

It seems, indeed, difficult to impress on anybody not familiar with the wonderful advantages of correct breathing, a full recognition of the vital bearing breath-control has on the well-being of the individual. Air is too ridiculously cheap to be much respected by most persons. And, too, breathing is ordinarily automatic, requiring no thought. Naturally enough, then, most persons give it no attention, since they have no realization of its importance.

Nature has provided that all great things should be essentially simple. It is thus with the process of breathing, which is the chief vital functioning of the body.

An ancient philosopher has said:

“The more we desire to have that which is superfluous, the more we meet with difficulties; the more necessary the thing is for living beings, the more easily it is found and the cheaper it is: air, water and food are indispensable to man. Air is most necessary, for if

man is without air a few moments he dies, whilst he can be without water a day or longer. Air is undoubtedly found more easily and is cheaper than water. Water is more necessary than food, and is proportionately cheaper; and so on, as to the different kinds of food and luxuries."

Note well the undeniable fact as asserted by the philosopher, that air is of the first importance.

If air had to be paid for, or if only a very limited amount were to be distributed to each consumer, there would be an instant and universal recognition of its supreme value. Its restriction would compel every individual to appreciate the unique worth of the true Elixir of Life.

## **What Mortality Statistics Teach Us**

According to statistics of the United States census, the annual death rate from all causes is one million. Of this number, four hundred thousand died from diseases of the lungs. The figures demonstrate that two persons at least out of every five come to their death

prematurely—and from a preventable cause.

Another aspect of the truth is gaining wider recognition day by day throughout the civilized world. This has to do with the appreciation of fresh air as a fundamental of health. There has been a remarkable awakening to this effect within a generation. Today, the preferred treatment of consumptives demands that they shall live out of doors if possible; the windows in the hospitals are seldom closed; sleeping porches are built wherever space permits.

It is unfortunately true, however, that there has been little advancement in general knowledge as to the science, the art, and practice of correct breathing. Yet, I have been surprised and gratified by the eager attention of those friends to whom I have made explanations and given exhibitions during the last few years. Without an exception, these friends have manifested a keen desire to learn the secrets of breath-control and to win for themselves the benefits thus conferred.

In order to broaden my knowledge and to render it exact, I have made seri-



ous studies and experiments through a term of years. I am convinced that if, instead of gymnasiums, institutions were established for training in the development of breath-control, the grim death-toll of one million for one year in our country would dwindle amazingly.

### **The Gymnastics of Breathing**

You must always remember that the correct carriage of the body during the period of the breathing exercises is a factor of great importance, since the lungs function variously in accordance with different postures of the body.

After the fundamental principles of deep breathing are mastered, the next step is to connect it with different exercises, respectively, of the arms, the legs, the trunk, and the head. At first it will be found somewhat difficult to combine attention to the various parts concerned, but the ability to do this will be readily mastered by practice.

The point involved is that the muscles of the chest have a reflex action on other muscles. For instance, when the lungs are full of air all the cells are inflated to the utmost, the chest is stretched, the

diaphragm is drawn down. The various muscles of the chest, of the back and of the abdomen are in a state of high tension. This tension should last only during the time in which the breath is held. Moreover, care must be taken that it shall not influence any other muscles besides those directly concerned.

When you exercise the arms rhythmically while the breath is being held, such movement of the arms must not be permitted to influence the breath. The result to be striven for is an intelligent control of the muscles, so that the various groups shall be made to act independently. Every school of gymnastics seeks to attain the same end—with a difference: In this system of breath-control, the lungs are trained—the chief requisite for all health, beauty and vigor.

And now that we have given this much of attention to the “Why?” let us go forward to the “How?” of breath-control.

### **Preparation for the Exercises**

The clothing should be loose, especially around the neck and chest. It is

advisable, when convenient, that the collar should be removed for the duration of the exercises. The buttons of the coat and vest, too, should be unfastened. (After a short time it will be found that these buttons must be placed nearer the edges of the garments.)

The girl or woman who wishes to get the best results from these exercises should be sure to have no clothing on that may bind her about the waist, constrict her diaphragm, or press upon her abdominal muscles.

It is almost superfluous to say that she should never attempt her exercises without, at least, first divesting herself of her corset—if she wears corsets. It is better to wear merely the comfortable union suit that so many sensible girls and women now wear. For this affords perfect freedom of movement and permits every muscle to be properly tensed and relaxed by the deep breathing exercises, and the gymnastic movements that accompany them.

The first requirement throughout all the exercises is a preliminary releasing from the lungs of the old, dead air, which is a continual source of self-poi-

soning. This accumulation must be driven out from the points of the lungs before the new breath is taken. It is repeated also on the conclusion of all the exercises. It must never be neglected.

## **The Cleansing Breath**

### EXPLANATION IN DETAIL

This exercise prefaces and ends every exercise in breathing. By prefacing an exercise, it makes space in the lungs for a capacity volume of new breath; by ending an exercise, it serves the important function of relaxing the whole body. It should be studied very carefully.

Exhale (blow out) energetically, saying "ss" between the teeth. Exaggerate the hissing sound of "s". This protects the throat. While doing this, bring shoulders and head forward as in Photograph 1 (a). This helps to press out that air which is never entirely removed from the lungs. We call this the residual air.

After exhaling all you can, begin the second part of this exercise by doing the opposite. Inhale slowly through the

nose, gradually bringing the outstretched arms overhead, performing a circle; also bring head and shoulders back, filling the lungs in all parts to great capacity. See Photograph I(b). Pause for one or two seconds, and relax suddenly. This is difficult to do correctly. To relax suddenly means to relax with a crash—the breath escapes at once, the arms fall, the knees bend and all this must take place together. With well-opened mouth you say “Ha!” to help make the breath escape quickly.

This very important sudden relaxation may lack snap and precision at first, but after a few days the mind will become trained to its action. After this relaxation take two shorter breaths in the same way; then pause before repeating.

## **The Cleansing Breath**

IN CONDENSED FORM

Position: Erect, with arms at side.

- (a) Exhale (blow out) quickly, saying “ss.” See Photograph I(a).
- (b) Inhale through nose, lifting arms to front.
- (c) Hold breath as in position, Photograph 1 (b).

- (d) Exhale suddenly "Ha," bringing arms down to sides.
- (e) Two short cleansing breaths. Pause ten seconds before repeating.

Ordinarily, do this exercise six to eight times, with pauses between.

## **The Short Controlled Breath**

### EXPLANATION IN DETAIL

Exhale first as shown in Photograph I (the cleansing breath). This precedes every exercise.

After the cleansing breath, inhale through the nose, while placing the hands lightly on hips, as in Photograph 2. Hold the breath a few seconds and open the mouth. Do not permit any breath to escape. The opening of the mouth proves to yourself that there is no contraction at the throat; instead, the diaphragm is holding the breath. Now, exhale, saying "ss" between the teeth, with relaxed throat. It is very important to observe that the chest is held high for the first half of expiration. Then let it quickly sink with the breath, and take two or three quick cleansing breaths.

Observe that the shoulders do not rise while inhaling—that you really inhale, not that you stretch the chest muscles and lift the shoulders, as I have seen even athletes do, when asked to take a deep breath. Besides opening the mouth during the period of held breath, it would be well to turn the neck several times to prove its freedom from tension.

## **The Short Controlled Breath**

### IN CONDENSED FORM

Position: Erect, with arms at sides.

- (a) Exhale as in Exercise One, saying “ss.”
- (b) Inhale through nose, placing hands on hips as in Photograph 2.
- (c) Hold breath one to four seconds; open mouth.
- (d) Exhale “ss” first holding chest high, then letting it sink slowly with breath.
- (e) Two to three cleansing breaths. Pause before repeating.

To be done five or six times with pauses.

## **The Climax Breath**

### EXPLANATION IN DETAIL

This exercise is the most difficult of all breathing gymnastics, and should not be attempted by the sick. It requires great endurance. Even an athlete should not attempt it, until the others are well in hand.

The first part is exactly like the exercise marked "The Short Controlled Breath." But in the second part, instead of expelling the air suddenly, you proceed to exhale very slowly (after holding the breath a few seconds). Care should be taken to see that the upper chest is held high as long as possible while exhaling. With the last atom of breath leaving the lungs, drop (relax) the shoulders and whole frame. Take quickly two or three more cleansing breaths to quiet the heart and lungs.

When one is ready for this strenuous exercise, it becomes a great force for building breadth and depth to the chest, and new inner vitality.

During the first weeks one performance of this exercise is enough for the day. After the second month two exer-



cises per day, fifth month, three exercises per day, etc., very gradually increasing the number.

## The Climax Breath

IN CONDENSED FORM

- (a) Exhale "ss."
- (b) Inhale slowly. "Hiss" through smallest opening of lips and closed teeth. Place hands on diaphragm, as in Photograph 3.
- (c) Hold breath several seconds.
- (d) Exhale slowly "ss" through small opening of lips and teeth.
- (e) Several cleaning breaths. **Long** pause.

Never to be performed more than twice at one time, during the first two months.

With girls or women who are inclined to stoutness it may sometimes be well to place the hands immediately under the busts—slightly supporting the breasts—instead of on the hips.

It will be found that the "relaxing" movements can thus be performed with more comfort—until such time as the muscles supporting the busts gain in strength and elasticity.

Care should be taken at first not to take in too much breath, nor to hold the breath too long. This matter, however, is entirely individual. Naturally, a greater amount of care must be exercised by a delicate child or by a consumptive than by a healthy youth.

And right here it should be emphasized that, if you are a business man, sitting for long hours every day at a desk, you should, in order to derive the maximum amount of good from these breathing exercises, plan to stand up, near the open window, and spend a few minutes practicing some of these simple exercises.

You will often find that what you thought was the fatigue of overwork is nothing more or less than staying too long in a close atmosphere, and making an insufficient use of your organs of respiration.

The feeling of freshness these exercises will impart, the increased vigor and the enhanced clearness of mind that will come to you, will prove a grateful source of surprise.

Many men, formerly in the habit of visiting for a cocktail, take a few deep

breaths in this scientific manner. They claim that this Fresh Air Cocktail is better than any coffee or liquor stimulant. And it can be certain that nothing but good effects can ever follow it.

By this system of breathing you can build up a wonderful physique. You can become strong and active, and have a superabundance of health and vitality—and without spending more than a few minutes a day at your breathing exercises. After a short time the *habit* for slow, deep breathing is formed, and as with all habits, it requires no attention whatsoever.

### **Hints for Controlled Breathing**

It should go almost without saying that to get the *best* effects from air you should breathe the purest air obtainable.

Air which is full of dust particles, for instance, may be actually irritating to the delicate mucous membrane that lines the nose, throat, bronchial tubes and air cells of the lungs.

This dust contains particles of organic matter derived from the excrement of horses and dogs, from dried atoms of of-

fal and decaying vegetable matter, or from dried mud impregnated with urine.

Indeed, it is very largely upon these particles that the micro-organisms—arch enemies of mankind as well as of animal kind—are carried on their errand of destruction.

These micro-organisms are most abundant in the air of inhabited rooms—and the more people in the room the greater the number of microbes present.

So don't be afraid of open windows—day or night. Remember Florence Nightingale's quaint observation, "Windows are made to be opened."

## **Always Breathe Through the Nose**

It should be remembered, also, that so far as possible, all inhalation of air should be through the nose. This is for two very important reasons.

First, the fine hairs lining the nasal passages act as a sieve through which the inspired air is strained.

Further than this the lower turbinated bodies in the nose, and the lower half of the middle turbinates are covered with

tiny cells (ciliated tissue) protruding from the membrane covering of the turbinates.

These cells catch and hold any particles of dust or other matter that may have slipped through the hair screen of the nostrils. Thus dust, germs and other harmful material are removed from the air currents, and prevented from reaching the lung cells.

The next most important reason is that the chambers of the nose, with their wonderfully rich blood supply, act as temperature regulators.

If you breathe air at zero temperature through the nose it is actually warmed to body temperature before it passes into the bronchial tubes.

If you were to breathe desert air, or the air of a blast furnace heated to 130 degrees—this superheated air would be cooled approximately to body temperature before it was passed into the lung cells.

If there is a tendency to breathe through the mouth, this will be manifested most decidedly at night, when

you are asleep, and the muscles are relaxed.

If you find that you are in the habit of sleeping with the mouth open—awakening in the morning with a dry, harsh throat, it might be well to adopt the device which Dr. William H. Fitzgerald introduced to the medical profession almost 20 years ago.

This consists merely in applying a small piece of surgeon's adhesive plaster over the closed lips, keeping them closed during all the hours of the night.

The court-plaster can be applied lengthwise over the lips; or it can be pasted across the lips, holding them firmly in the closed position. Many find the latter method the most practical.

The more fresh air you can get in your home, your office or school or workshop, or wherever you may have to spend your day time—the better off you'll be.



